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Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

Statement submitted by Ius Primi Viri International Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2008/100.

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Statement

Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development – The role of education:

Unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in developed countries pose a serious threat: these lifestyles negatively impacted the efforts to mainstream the principle of sustainability. At the same time, persistent poverty remains a challenge to sustainable development which, as stressed by Bruntland Commission in 1987, should meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The achievement of sustainable development objectives requires a long time horizon, sound policies, and effective international cooperation. In synthesis, world society requires a new education so that human beings will be able to learn since birth to respect life, their and others dignity, and laws ruling human interactions and social development. So they will develop a conscience capable to make free choices during the whole span of their life.

Since 2000, the governments of the world, together with the United Nations, launched four initiatives for development focused on education:

- The Millennium Development Goals
- Education for All
- The United Nations Literacy Decade.
- The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

They are in line with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and are important steps towards realizing the Right to Education for All, essential and indispensable for the exercise of all other human rights and for development.

Education for sustainable development is a vision of education seeking to balance human and economic well-being with cultural traditions and respect for the Earth's natural resources. The role of greatest responsibility is played by teachers, who control and direct mental, cultural and social development during the most important stages of man's life.

At present teachers do not educate, in the etymological sense of the term, that is "exducere", to bring out individual's potentialities, rather condition to repeat an endless series of notions that stifle the creative potentialities of human brain and compel it to stereotypical behaviours discriminating the fundamental physiological functioning given by genetic heredity.

The first step to implement sustainable development through education consists in training educators capable to train new human beings able to face and solve the serious ecological disasters as well as the psychosocial pollution leading us to self-destruction. A new pedagogical methodology is needed (as stressed by UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development).

To this end we apply studies based on thirty years of multidisciplinary and integrated research, which led to an innovative methodology capable to transform abstract principles into consciousness and behaviour. It provides basic knowledge enabling individuals to recognize themselves in their primary roles as men and women, considering that they begin to mature as such since birth ad that every piece of information contributes to determine their behaviour.

No law, no ethic rule, no human right could be ever realized without this step, as to form citizens, aware of the importance of human rights in inspiring their actions and those of the States they belong to, is fundamental. The fulfilment of these rights in individuals and State behaviours will open the road to concrete respect for environment, whose "health" corresponds to the wellbeing of mankind.